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U.S. Tariff Commission

Live bobwhite quail

Washington

1925

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LIVE BOBWHITE QUAIL

REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES
TARIFF COMMISSION TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

WITH APPENDIX
PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1925

UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

LIVE BOBWHITE QUAIL

REPORT

OF THE
UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION
TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

INVESTIGATION OF THE COSTS OF PRODUCTION IN
THE UNITED STATES AND IN THE PRINCIPAL
COMPETING FOREIGN COUNTRY OF
BOBWHITE QUAIL

WITH APPENDIX
PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1925

UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION

Office: Eighth and E Streets NW., Washington, D. C.

COMMISSIONERS

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ALFRED P. DENNIS, *Vice Chairman.*
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HENRY H. GLASSIE.
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

SEPTEMBER 28, 1925.

The PRESIDENT,
The White House.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Herewith I have the honor to transmit the report of the Tariff Commission in the investigation, for the purposes of section 315 of the tariff act of 1922, of the costs of production in the United States and in the principal competing foreign country of bobwhite quail.

Respectfully,

(Signed)

THOMAS O. MARVIN,
Chairman.

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of transmittal.....	III
Introductory:	
Reference to files.....	1
Rates of duty.....	1
History of investigation.....	1
Information obtained in commission's investigation:	
Imports.....	2
Value of imported quail to bird life of States.....	3
Comparability of domestic and Mexican quail.....	3
Domestic propagation of quail.....	3
Prices of Mexican quail.....	4
Prices paid by States for bobwhite quail trapped in the United States.....	4
Cost of production:	
Domestic.....	4
Comparison of foreign and domestic costs.....	5
Formal statement of conclusions.....	6
Appendix:	
Proclamation by the President.....	7

INVESTIGATION OF THE DIFFERENCES IN COSTS OF PRODUCTION OF LIVE BOBWHITE QUAIL

TO THE PRESIDENT:

The United States Tariff Commission respectfully submits the following report upon an investigation of the differences in the costs of production of live bobwhite quail in the United States and in competing countries for the purposes of section 315 of the tariff act of 1922.

INTRODUCTORY

Reference to files.—This report is based upon the following documents which are available for reference in the files of the Tariff Commission.

File of the original documents including the application dated May 13, 1925.

Expert's confidential report to the commission dated July 20, 1925.¹

Published summary of information in the matter of live bobwhite quail, dated, July 21, 1925.

Transcript of public hearing on September 10, 1925.

Rates of duty.—Act of 1922, paragraph 711, 50 cents per bird; act of 1913, paragraph 316, free; act of 1909, paragraph 510, free.

History of the investigation.—On May 13, 1925, Mr. E. LeCompte, State game warden, State of Maryland, requested an investigation for purposes of section 315 of the tariff act of 1922, looking toward a decrease in the rate of duty on quail. In addition to this application the commission received 121 applications for a decrease in the duty on game birds, including quail, from the State game commissions, game protective associations, and others.

The commission ordered on May 19, 1925, an investigation for the purposes of section 315 of live bobwhite quail. The investigation of the domestic production costs was started immediately. During the months of May, June, and July, 1925, duly authorized agents of the commission studied the State game farm of Virginia, where live bobwhite quail are bred in captivity, and interviewed game commissioners and persons interested in game production and conservation in the States of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois, Kansas, Texas, and Mississippi. The operations of American firms trapping and importing Mexican quail were also studied.

After giving the 30 days' notice as required by law a public hearing in the case was held in the offices of the commission in Washington on September 10, 1925, at which time testimony was offered by various State game commissioners, or their representatives, and other interested parties. No testimony was offered to the commission in opposition to the reduction of the duty.²

¹ Includes confidential file of costs.

² Transcript of public hearing, Sept. 10, 1925, p. 88.

INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATION

From the investigation of live bobwhite quail outlined above the following information has been obtained:

The bobwhite quail is an upland bird originally plentiful in the United States excepting those northern portions where severe winters and heavy snows prevail. The bird does not migrate and can only exist in a climate which will permit feeding at all seasons. Ornithologists claim that the bobwhite quail is of value to the farmer since it feeds largely upon destructive insects and weedseeds.

Before the days of regulated hunting seasons and limited bags the quail was extensively shot and was highly valued by sportsmen for both sporting purposes and for its food qualities. As a result the birds in many of the States became quite scarce and appeared to be threatened with extinction. Practically every State of the Union has laws which forbid the trapping of quail except under the supervision of the State game departments, and which further forbid the shipment of birds outside the State. Thus State game departments desiring quail for propagation and restocking purposes turned to Mexico, where large numbers of live quail are to be found. The State departments have, as a rule, purchased the birds from Mexico with money derived from the hunters' fees. The birds are placed on State lands and sanctuaries suitable for quail.

The State game departments visited report that many licenses are taken out in their States for quail hunting primarily. In the hunting season of 1923-24 there were approximately 4,400,000 licensed hunters. The following gives the approximate number of licensed hunters for all purposes for some of the States which are important purchasers of Mexican quail:

Pennsylvania.....	480,544
Illinois.....	300,000
New Jersey.....	154,434
Virginia.....	93,347
Massachusetts.....	87,441
Kentucky.....	72,616
Maryland.....	62,799

IMPORTS

All of the imports of bobwhite quail into the United States come from Mexico. Mexico is, therefore, the principal competing country for the purposes of section 315. The imports of quail began in 1910, and they have increased in number annually with some few exceptions.

TABLE 1.—Imports into the United States of live quail from Mexico, 1910-1925

Season ¹	Number of quail	Season ¹	Number of quail
1910.....	1,370	1918 ¹	5,205
1911.....	3,110	1919.....	4,358
1912.....	7,570	1920.....	23,473
1913.....	2,936	1921.....	28,969
1914.....	2,936	1922.....	38,224
1915.....	3,341	1923 ²	9,143
1916.....	8,000	1924.....	27,779
1917.....	32,514	1925.....	36,226

¹ Shipping season between Feb. 10 and Apr. 30.

² The United States import duty of 50 cents per bird and the Mexican export tax of approximately 28.5 cents per bird were imposed between the shipping seasons of 1922 and 1923.

In 1923, by a decree of the President of Mexico, the exportation of live bobwhite quail was forbidden. Representations were made to the Mexican Government in behalf of the various States interested in obtaining quail from Mexico, and as a result Mexican officials have permitted the exportation of live bobwhite quail in specified quantities to State game commissions for propagation purposes.

Therefore, in order to trap and export quail from Mexico permits must be obtained from the Minister of Agriculture of the Mexican Government. All of the trapping and exporting of quail from Mexico have been done in recent years by American concerns operating from points in Texas along the Mexican border. In 1923 and 1924 there were three concerns operating; and in 1925 two, one at Brownsville, Tex., and the other at Laredo, Tex.

The agents of the United States Biological Survey inspect the birds at the points of entry to determine whether they are free from disease, and further cooperate with the Mexican officials to prevent the importation of more birds than are authorized. The importing season runs from February 10 to April 30. Thus the quail are afforded an opportunity for breeding after they have been released on State sanctuaries.

VALUE OF IMPORTED QUAIL TO BIRD LIFE OF STATES

The commission has interviewed, as detailed above, a great many of the State game commissioners who purchased quail from Mexico. In their opinions of the value of quail to the bird life in their particular States they are practically unanimous as to the ability of the Mexican quail to breed and increase. Further, a number of statements were made that the Mexican quail mate with our domestic quail and thrive.

COMPARABILITY OF DOMESTIC AND MEXICAN QUAIL

Leading ornithologists have been interviewed, and appear to be in agreement that the domestic and Mexican quail are members of the same family and differ only in that the Mexican bird is slightly smaller and has a lighter color. The Texan quail is identical with the Mexican quail.

DOMESTIC PROPAGATION OF QUAIL

The propagation of quail has been undertaken in the United States a number of times and has rarely been successful. Two methods are employed:

- (1) In captivity by what is called the artificial method.
- (2) On islands by the natural method.

The artificial method is at present practiced on the State game farm of Virginia, where, in 1924, 2,375 birds were shipped to various parts of Virginia for the stocking of sanctuaries and game farms. These birds, however, averaged in age from six to eight weeks in contrast to full-grown birds shipped from Mexico.

The natural method of propagation on sanctuary islands has been tried at two points in the United States—St. Joseph Island, Tex., and on an island 4 miles offshore at Pascagoula, Miss. Neither of these operations thus attempted have shown significant commercial

development. The commission's agents received information which would indicate that the business as thus conducted has been practically discontinued.

The commission received testimony at its public hearing³ that the commercial propagation of quail in the United States is looked upon as impracticable and could not be successfully attempted by the States without undue expenditures of public funds.

PRICES OF MEXICAN QUAIL

There are no published price quotations for Mexican quail. According to the commission's information, the prices for 1920 to 1922 paid to a large importer ranged from \$1.18 to \$1.50 per bird, including prepaid express charges. Beginning with the season of 1923, after the imposition of the United States import duty of 50 cents per bird and the Mexican export tax of 28.5 cents, the price obtained by this importer averaged about \$2 per bird, not including express charges. Other importers quoted similar prices for this latter period.

PRICES PAID BY STATES FOR BOBWHITE QUAIL TRAPPED IN THE UNITED STATES

In the States in which birds are trapped State game departments pay a stipulated price per bird delivered alive at specified points, the trapper supplying the necessary equipment.

TABLE 2.—Prices paid by States for bobwhite quail trapped in the United States, 1923-1925

State	Year	Stipulated price paid for quail trapped
Kansas.....	1923	\$1.00
	1924	.75
	1925	1.00
	1925	1.00
Texas.....	1925	.50
Maryland.....	1925	.50

COST OF PRODUCTION

DOMESTIC COSTS

The commission's agents secured propagation and trapping costs in the United States, as follows:

Propagation costs.—(1) The costs of propagation of quail in captivity by the artificial method as used by the State of Virginia. (2) The costs for 1924-25 of the propagation of quail under natural conditions on a sanctuary island off the coast of Texas.

Trapping costs.—(1) Trapping costs for 1925 in Texas. (2) Trapping costs for 1925 in Maryland.

FOREIGN COSTS

Propagation costs.—So far as the commission is informed there is no commercial propagation of quail in Mexico.

Trapping costs.—The commission's agents secured Mexican trapping costs for all birds trapped for exportation to the United States

³ Transcript of public hearing, pp. 30, 40, and 51.

during 1925. Also data were secured which enabled the commission to make accurate cost calculations for 95 per cent of the birds trapped in Mexico for exportation to the United States during 1924.

COMPARISON OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN COSTS

The information obtained by the commission indicates that the artificial methods employed at the Virginia State game department's farm can not be looked upon as production on a commercial basis. It may be regarded as a State activity which has not been successfully conducted by private individuals. Further, the natural method of propagation on an island was found by the commission's agents to have been stopped in the State of Texas because of the withdrawal of the necessary permits from the State game department. In Mississippi the business had not proceeded far enough to indicate whether or not it was commercially feasible.

The commission has taken as a basis for comparing the cost of production of bobwhite quail in the United States and the chief competing country the cost of trapping live bobwhite quail in the United States and in Mexico. The commission's agents obtained detailed costs of trapping birds in Texas and Maryland in 1925 from the individuals conducting these operations.

The commission in its investigation secured trapping and marketing costs for two operators in Mexico covering 100 per cent of the birds exported to the United States in 1925 and for approximately 95 per cent in 1924. The commission also secured trapping and incidental costs in Texas and Maryland and propagation costs in Virginia and Texas.⁴ Weighted average costs are presented in summary form in Tables 3 and 4 following.

TABLE 3.—Weighted average costs of trapping bobwhite quail, 1925

Item	1925, cost per bird
United States:	
Texas and Maryland:—	
Labor.....	\$0.148
Auto expense.....	.182
Shipping boxes.....	.032
Quail bait and feed.....	.013
Traps and nets.....	.006
Locating trapping ground and supervision.....	.347
Total United States cost of trapping.....	.728
Mexico: ⁵	
Labor.....	.308
Shipping boxes.....	.024
Feed.....	.028
Rent.....	.003
Permit to trap and export.....	.154
Total Mexican cost of trapping.....	.517
Excess of United States over Mexican costs.....	.211

⁴ Include costs for all birds trapped in Maryland and Texas.

⁵ Costs for Mexico are based on number of live birds delivered, not on number of birds actually trapped. (See Table 4.)

⁶ Does not include cost of supervision.

⁷ The details of all costs for trapping, marketing, and propagating are shown in the confidential file.

TABLE 4.—*Weighted average costs¹ of trapping bobwhite quail in Mexico and other expenditures of importing and marketing such quail in the United States for 1925*

Item	Cost per bird, 1925
Trapping costs in Mexico.....	\$0.517
Sundry importing expenses.....	.019
Marketing costs in the United States ²149
Total.....	.685
Transportation costs in Mexico and at border points ³030
Total, including transportation in Mexico and at border.....	.715
Mexican export tax.....	.297
Total, including Mexican export tax.....	1.012
United States import duty.....	.521
Total, including United States import duty.....	1.533

¹ Total costs pertain to the total number of birds trapped; the unit costs, however, are based upon the number of live arrivals. In 1925, 39,256 birds were actually imported, duty paid, of which 37,654 were reported as live arrivals. In 1924, 26,286 birds were imported and 25,963 birds reported as live arrivals.

² Includes miscellaneous charges in Mexico and the United States, such as Government stamps, entry broker fees, bridge tolls, etc.

³ Includes shipping crates, advertising, telegrams, selling expenses, and supervision.

⁴ None of the items given in this table include any transportation and shipping costs incurred in the United States.

FORMAL STATEMENT OF CONCLUSIONS

1. Mexico is the principal competing country.
2. Bobwhite quail are not successfully propagated commercially in the United States.
3. The cost of trapping quail in the wild state in the United States and the principal competing country—Mexico—is accepted as the cost of production for the purposes of section 315 of the tariff act of 1922.
4. The average cost of production, as thus defined, of live quail for the States of Maryland and Texas, in which the trapping of live quail is carried on, was \$0.728 per bird for the year 1925. Similar cost in Mexico for the period was found to be \$0.517.
5. The difference in cost of production, as thus defined, of live bobwhite quail in the United States and the principal competing country—Mexico—for the season 1925 was \$0.211.
6. The present rate of duty of 50 cents per bird is 28.9 cents in excess of the difference in cost of production as ascertained. The maximum reduction permissible under the law is 50 per cent of the present duty, or 25 cents per bird. Therefore, the differences in cost of production justify the maximum reduction of 50 per cent in the existing duty, or a rate of duty of 25 cents each.

THOMAS O. MARVIN,
Chairman.

ALFRED P. DENNIS,
Vice Chairman.

HENRY H. GLASSIE,

A. H. BALDWIN,

E. B. BROSSARD,

Commissioners.

NOTE.—Commissioner Costigan did not participate in the above report of the commission.

APPENDIX

A PROCLAMATION

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECREASING RATE OF DUTY ON LIVE BOB-WHITE QUAIL

Whereas in and by section 315 (a) of Title III of the act of Congress approved September 21, 1922, entitled "An act to provide revenue, to regulate commerce with foreign countries, to encourage the industries of the United States, and for other purposes," it is, among other things, provided that whenever the President, upon investigation of the differences in costs of production of articles wholly or in part the growth or product of the United States and of like or similar articles wholly or in part the growth or product of competing foreign countries, shall find it thereby shown that the duties fixed in this act do not equalize the said differences in costs of production in the United States and the principal competing country he shall, by such investigation, ascertain said differences and determine and proclaim the changes in classifications or increases or decreases in rates of duty provided in said act shown by said ascertained differences in such costs of production necessary to equalize the same;

Whereas in and by section 315 (c) of said act it is further provided that in ascertaining the differences in costs of production, under the provisions of subdivisions (a) and (b) of said section, the President, in so far as he finds it practicable, shall take into consideration (1) the differences in conditions in production, including wages, costs of material, and other items in costs of production of such or similar articles in the United States and in competing foreign countries; (2) the differences in the wholesale selling prices of domestic and foreign articles in the principal markets of the United States; (3) the advantages granted to a foreign producer by a foreign government, or by a person, partnership, corporation, or association in a foreign country; and (4) any other advantages or disadvantages in competition;

Whereas, under and by virtue of said section of said act, the United States Tariff Commission has made an investigation to assist the President in ascertaining the differences in costs of production of and of all other facts and conditions enumerated in said section with respect to the article described in paragraph 711 of Title I of said tariff act of 1922, namely live bob-white quail, being wholly or in part the growth or product of the United States, and

of and with respect to a like or similar article wholly or in part the growth or product of competing foreign countries;

Whereas in the course of said investigation a hearing was held, of which reasonable public notice was given and at which parties interested were given reasonable opportunity to be present, to produce evidence, and to be heard;

And whereas the President upon said investigation of said differences in costs of production of said article wholly or in part the growth or product of the United States and of the like or similar article wholly or in part the growth or product of competing foreign countries, has thereby found that the principal competing country is Mexico and that the duty fixed in said title and act does not equalize the differences in costs of production in the United States and in said principal competing country, namely Mexico, and has ascertained and determined the decreased rate of duty necessary to equalize the same.

Now, therefore, I, Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States of America, do hereby determine and proclaim that the decrease in the rate of duty provided in said act shown by said ascertained differences in said costs of production necessary to equalize the same is as follows;

A decrease in said duty on live bob-white quail valued at \$5.00 or less each (within the limit of total decrease provided for in said act) from 50 cents each to 25 cents each.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this third day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fiftieth.

[SEAL]

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

By the President:
FRANK B. KELLOGG,
Secretary of State.

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**END OF
TITLE**